2: Hockings E-4,5 (1962-1977) 1980
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regular exchange relationship, giving grain to the Irulas in return for honey, bees-wax, timber, nets and other jungle products (Grigg, 1880, 215–216; Macleane, 1893, 373). Like the Kurumbas, Irulas may be asked to play music for Badaga ceremonies when Kotas cannot be approached for a band. Irula women living in the Badaga villages near Ha:sanu:ru have sometimes become the mistresses of those Badagas but not elsewhere.

BADAGAS AND KASUVAS

Although it has been suggested (Thurston, 1909, vol. III, 256; Noble, 1968, 69) that the Kasuvas ('labourers') are merely Irula tribesmen who moved onto the labourer settlements in plantations over the past century, their geographical distribution does not support this. Kasuvas are only found in the Moyar Ditch north of the Nilgiri Plateau, whereas the local Irulas only live south and east of the plateau (Noble, 1968, 6, Fig. 2). At most it can be said that these are two names for people of very similar culture.

The Kasuvas perform a service for the more northerly Badagas analogous to that which the Todas perform for those living farther south: Kasuvas take Badaga cattle down into the Moyar Ditch for grazing and breeding (Francis, 1908, 209; Noble, 1968, 69–72). A Badaga owner occasionally visits his herds there, but the animals are regularly tended by a Kasuva family who jointly receive perhaps six to ten rupees weekly as well as vegetables and grain. In addition they get a ration of rice, an annual supply of clothing and occasional gifts, for example, at a Kasuva wedding. The livestock camps *(hundis)* of Kasuvas are mainly used for breeding, but large numbers of cows and buffaloes may be sent there by the Badagas when grazing on the Nilgiris is sparse. More generally,

> Dry cows are taken down, and good milk yielders are brought back up . . . Milk and buttermilk [yielded by Badaga cattle while in the Moyar Ditch] may be consumed by the Kasuva caretakers. Clarified butter carried up by Badagas or Kasuvas is either sold or consumed by Badagas (Noble, 1968, 72).

Be:ragani, the only Badaga village with a sacred herd attached to its temple (Francis, 1908, 316), has for over two decades kept its

3: Hockings, E-5 (1962-1963) 1968
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A ritual is not a network, but it is a medium of communication and provides an occasion for the personnel of all the networks of the village to converge in one place and act out their public roles. Ceremonial events are thus events of communication in two distinct senses. First, the confluence of people allows many local information networks to be reactivated; someone asks about getting a loan, another seeks opinions on a land dispute, a third takes a look at some potential brides. Second, the ritual itself conveys information to the participants. As we shall demonstrate, this message is a dramatization of the idea that the community is stable and its future assured.

The Todas, Kotas, and Badagas, three communities on the Nilgiri Plateau[1] in Southern India, are all cattle-keepers. For the Todas buffalo herding is the major occupation; for the Badagas it is subsidiary to agriculture; and for the Kotas it is subsidiary to both agriculture and a variety of traditional handicrafts. Each of these groups now keeps cattle only for their milk products, though until several decades ago the Badagas and Kotas also used oxen for drawing their ploughs.[2] Each group gives salt to its herds once or more a year and each culture has a complex ceremonial for feeding the salt to the cattle.

Confining ourselves to the Badagas,[3] we now ask a question that would in fact be equally pertinent to the case of the Todas or the Kotas: why is the giving of salt a day-long ceremony instead of merely a routine act of animal husbandry? Why are so many people and so much time involved in what a single boy could do in half an hour? The Badagas themselves would answer this question by invoking the "force of tradition"; but surely tradition is not *per se* an adequate explanation for the persistence of such a ceremony. The Badagas also maintain what is to them a perfectly rational explanation for the act of giving salt to their cattle. After heavy rains the young grass "tastes saltless," and the herds graze unenthusiastically; their owners make up this dietary deficiency by giving salt to the animals. The explanation suggests that these people understand something of the leaching process, but it certainly does not answer our original question: why has the act of salt-giving become a major annual ceremony?

Salt is regularly given to the cattle in March and at the end of December; in years when the grass is "saltless" a third dosage is given, generally in the month of June. On all three occasions the salt is given to the animals on a Monday, the weekly holiday of the Badagas, but it is only in March that the event is treated ceremonially.[4]

In the various writings abut the Badagas during the past 150 years there are only two brief references (Benbow 1928: 32-33; Karl 1945: 17), both fairly recent, to this salt-giving ceremony. Nevertheless it seems certain that the ceremony has a considerable antiquity; the comparable Toda ceremony was mentioned by Father Finicio in 1603 (Rivers 1906: 726). The Badagas did not become literate until the present century, yet they have an extensive and generally credible body of orally transmitted history relating to their way of life in the days shortly before the British settled in the Nilgiri Hills (i.e., prior to 1820). These Badaga accounts are explicit about

4: Hockings E-5 (1962-1977) 1980
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759 instructions for taking the medicine he prepares from it, depending upon which of the half-dozen related *ka:male* diseases he diagnoses.
757 10.9. Therapists, both male and female, who treat people are regularly called in to treat animals too, and midwives are often asked
759 to help deliver calves. Kurumbas and Todas are not called in to
232 treat Badaga cattle; (the Todas treat their own). Women therapists never treat cattle for *kundu* (see Appendix), since this requires that the therapists remove his loin-cloth at the time.

75 It is a common subject for question and objection on the part of Western intellectuals that primitive therapeutic systems probably do no demonstrable good to the patient, unless it be the psychological good of convincing him that he is cared for. This would not, I think, be a charitable view to adopt with Badaga therapeutics, since the many herbal remedies do demonstrably cure very often. Though we can probably accept that therapy has a real role in maintenance
759 of the human organism and in its reproduction, we cannot however
232 speak with so much confidence of the ecological role played by therapists in the preservation of cattle. The prayers and rituals for curing cattle perhaps relieve Badaga anxieties, but they clearly bring no objective benefit to the cattle unless accompanied by effective medicines. Most of the cures and advice offered by therapists do in fact have to be ruled out as ineffective: it is perhaps only with the birth and raising of calves that we can feel confident the therapist makes a genuine contribution to the health of cattle and hence to the supply of Badaga foodstuffs.

Missionary Therapists

177 10.10. It is important to realize that Badagas have been familiar
797 with selected aspects of Western medical practice since shortly after John Sullivan established the first British settlement on the Nilgiris in 1819 (Hockings 1973). While there is no record of his having offered, or even been qualified to do, any medical treatment for the native population, others did begin to do this soon afterwards. In the 1840s a retired judge, J.G. Casamajor, devoted his declining years to the health and welfare of his Badaga neighbours: "There was a room in [his] Kaity house, a sort of hospital, where Mr. Casamajor for a long time attended every morning from 7-8 o'clock, giving medicines to the fever patients, putting plasters upon the wounds and sores of the poor, giving clothes to the naked [sic!],

APPENDIX

Veterinary Practice

The following paraphrase of my notes records the extent of the knowledge about how to treat cattle that my informant K. Sithamma was able to provide. As we have shown (10.3-10.6), she was a therapist who lived in a cattle-keeping village all her life.

(*a*) It is difficult to breed buffalo calves because of the cold climate in the Nilgiris. Some buffaloes have a thick milk which can kill the calf. To overcome this danger a little opium is given to the calf when it is born, and it is then able to digest the thick milk. If it still has trouble, however, a little more opium is given it after two to four weeks and this ensures that the calf lives. More care is taken over a female than a bull calf.

If there is no opium to give a calf at birth, there is instead a medicine to give it when it becomes sick. We know when a calf is sick because it is quiet and will not take milk. The medicine for the calf is made by pounding the root of the common Nilgiri barberry to get its juice. The leaf of a small bean, *hittili avare*, is then taken and a mixtnre of salt and butter smeared on it. The juice of the root is poured on this and it is given to the calf to eat. Care must be taken that the buffalo calf gets only a limited quantity of milk till the fifth or sixth month of life. This is done by milking the mother, as a check on the quantity the calf can get. If it is the wet season the animal is allowed less milk than if it is hot and dry. Just after the calf has drunk it is tied up for a half or one hour to keep it quiet; for it should not run about right after feeding.

In the case of a cow's (rather than a buffalo's) calf, if it is known that the cow has thick milk someone cuts the end of each

41 Hockings E-5 (1962-1977) 1980
AW50 Badaga AW50

●232 ear of the newborn calf, and then the sickness will not affect it as it would a buffalo calf.

The only ailment that can affect a cow's calf is caused by insufficient milk, a result of "heat" in the cow's body. If the calf is male no one cares much about this; but if it is a female the owners either refrain from milking the mother or else take less so that enough remains for the calf.

(*b*) *Hotte bigiyalu*—There are several diseases that affect grown cattle. One non-contagious disease has for symptom the cow or buffalo either standing up or lying down, but not grazing, and with a swollen stomach. There is a medicine for this. The juice is ground out of the root of a common Nilgiri barberry, and chilles are ground up with it to form a fairly liquid paste. The cow is made to drink this, and will be cured in one or two days. One dosage is enough.

(*c*) *Kundu*—Anolher disease which can attack a strong ox or buffalo arises from too much "cold" in the body, and is a development from *hotte bigiyalu*. The animal is kept in a shed and is not allowed to out graze for two or three days. During that time it is given dry hay, but no water or green grass. Generally the animal will lie down, as its stomach is swollen. The person who comes to cure it must be an old man. He has a cane rod 1/2 meter long, and on one end of it is an ovoid form the size of an orange, made on a base of cane with clay, cowdung, flowers and ash, mixed in milk and allowed to harden. (The one I saw had been made about 1800 A.D.) This *udu mande*, as it is called, is only used by men—it cannot even be touched by mature women, or by anyone wearing shoes. The therapist first bathes himself, then touches some cowdung to his lips. He prays to God, asking for the sickness to disappear. Then, holding the rod, he strokes the animal with its knobbly end, from the head to the tail, along the stomach, and on either side of the body. Once that is done he spits three times in any direction. Then the man takes off his loincloth and lays it over the prone animal. While it lies there he steps over it, and then puts his loincloth back on. Provided the animal is not given water until well, it recovers within three days.

(*d*) Cattle can also have two kinds of contagious disease, called *be:koko* (in the mouth) and *pitcalu* (watery dung). The cure is probably the same for both. The whole village does not work for three consecutive days, the first of which must be a Friday, Sunday or Tuesday. The essential part of the cure is that once on each of these three mornings the village prays to God to remove the sick-

4: Hockings E-5 (1962-1977) 1980
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ness. On the day before the first prayer an old or important man or the priest himself goes out and brings three plants; one of these is holly-leaf barberry another Bengal currant. When he gets home with them he leaves them on the roof of the cowshed. Each morning the villagers go to the Bassava (i.e., Lingayat ox) image in the temple. There the priest breaks coconuts and offers *pu:ja*; some important men of the village help him. They pray to God—no particular God—to cure the cattle, and after the *pu:ja* all go to the village green. There they make an odd number of fires in a straight line. Some of the leaves previously gathered from the jungle are then put on each fire. The man who lives in the Great House (that of the village's founding ancestor) is the person who brings fire from his home in the first instance. So as to be in a purified state for this act, he should lie apart from his family on the previous night on sacking or hessian. He should not wear any woollen item, or have any sexual contact. Once the fires are burning, the whole herd of the village, including also the apparently healthy cattle, is brought to the green and made to cross the line of fires. Although there are a number of fires there, they have been built so close together that the cattle cannot pass in between them but have to walk right across them. This whole process is repeated on each of the three mornings.

(*e*) There is a very rare eye disease among cattle called *kan:belle*; the eye waters and there is whiteness over the pupil. To cure it a therapist grinds the leaf of cured tobacco to extract the juice, and mixes this with salt and water. The liquid is poured into the animal's eye when it opens. This is done two or three times every morning for several days, until the whiteness clears up.

Until recently epidemics in the buffalo herds were attributed to the sorcery of Kurumbas or Todas (Metz 1864: 21-22).

[p. 212 is blank]